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## AN EVENING WITH THE TELEGRAPH.

'The spider's touch, how exquisitely fine,  
Feels at each thread, and lives along the line.'

On arriving at the — station, I found that my luggage, which was to have been sent on from town, had not arrived. There was no time to be lost, and on applying to the superintendent of the station, an order was given to make inquiries at London by means of the telegraph. Impatient to get some information about the missing baggage, I strolled to the electric telegraph office, to hear what was the answer received. But no satisfactory information had as yet been obtained; on the contrary, nothing at all was known about the matter. I wanted another message sent up to town, but on working the needles, it was found that the telegraph was engaged in corresponding with some intermediate or branch station.

The clerk, with whom I continued chatting through the little opening where all communications are given and received, was very young; but there was something in his manner that prepossessed you favourably, and, moreover, there was a total absence of that abruptness of speech and quickness of manner that seem to have become a second nature with our railway officials. At last he invited me to enter his office—the very thing I had been manoeuvring for and longing to do—for as I squeezed my head through the small opening, and looked into the snug room, warmly carpeted, and, although it was the beginning of August, with a fire burning in the grate, I could just catch a glimpse of the small mahogany stand and dial of the telegraph, with which he had been talking to the people in London about my trunks, and was very desirous of seeing a little more. Books were lying about the table, which seemed to indicate a taste not only for literature, but for its more imaginative productions; and so, then, as we sat over the cheerful fire, our conversation taking its tone from the volume into which I had dipped, we chatted about authors, style, and such matters.

'You would hardly believe,' he said, 'how such an employment as mine teaches one curtness: how one gets into the habit of saying what one has to say in as few words as possible, and yet with perfect clearness. I write occasionally little articles, and I find that in them I unconsciously avoid all redundancy of words, just as when transmitting a message. You have no idea what a lengthy affair the messages are which we have given us to transmit, with so many useless expressions that make the inquiry, or whatever it may be, nearly twice as long as necessary. In delivering it, we cut it down about one-half, and yet our version

tells all that is to be said quite as intelligibly as the original.'

'The cause, no doubt, is, that those who want to give some information about a missing thing are anxious to describe it with all exactness, in order to make as sure as possible of its being recognised.'

'But the details on such occasions,' he answered, 'are really without end. Now we, for our parts, seize on the salient features: we give the necessary marks or tokens, and these only. For nothing is the telegraph so often put in requisition as to inquire about ladies' dogs that are missing. Hardly a day passes without such inquiries. And such descriptions! A perfect history of the animals' habits and virtues: it seems they never can say enough. I have often thought how they would be shocked did they but see how all the long history of their favourites is condensed into a couple of lines. And yet it answers the purpose as well.'

He here turned round to the dial-plate of the telegraph, and after a moment's watching, looked again into the volume, the leaves of which he was turning over.

'Was any one speaking to you?' I asked.

'Not to me; they are talking with the — station.'

'But how did you know it?—what made you look up?' I asked.

'Because I heard the wires.'

'That's very strange,' I observed: 'my hearing is unusually fine, yet I heard nothing.'

'It is habit; besides, perhaps, you heard the vibration too without knowing what it was. My ears are so alive to the sound, that, as I sit here reading, the instant the hands of the dial move, I hear them. That low click-click attracts my attention as surely as the bell.'

'There is an alarm, is there not, which sounds when the clerk's attention is required?'

'Yes,' he said; 'this is it.' And so saying, he touched a wire, and instantly a hammer struck upon a bell, making a slow, penetrating, long-continued noise. 'But I generally stop the communication with it, for it is so loud, that it is extremely disagreeable to be disturbed by the ringing of that thing at one's shoulder. Besides, I hear the other just as well, let me be never so immersed in what I am about.'

I now heard such a snap as takes place when, on putting your knuckles to an electric machine, the spark is produced. It was repeated, and on looking up, I saw the needles reeling to and fro. The clerk observed them for a moment, and then rising, went to the machine. Backwards and forwards they went, to the right and to the left, then with a jerk half-way back again—left, right, left—left, left—jerk, jerk—right, left, jerk, and so on; while the clerk, who held

two handles hanging from the instrument in his hands, every now and then would also give a good rattle with them, and pull them right and left, and give an answering jerk. All the time, of course, he was looking fixedly at the dial-plate, as he would have done into the countenance of a person who was speaking to him, and whose character he fain would learn from his looks. Jerk, jerk, jerk—rattle, rattle, rattle—all was done; and writing down the message on a slate beside him, he copied it afterwards on a paper to give to one of the porters. It was about some boxes sent on to — by the last train.

'I know what clerk sent down that message, he said. 'It was —.'

'But how do you know which clerk it was?'

'By the manner of his handling the needles, and their corresponding movements. I am as sure who is working them as if I saw the person with my eyes. You of course would not detect any difference in the vibrations, yet there is a very great difference. There may be timidity, indecision, flurry, or firmness, in their movements. You see quite clearly if the person speaking to you is master of what he is about; if he does it with ease and decision, or if he is spelling his way, and anxious about getting through the matter well. And it is not only the quickness of the delivery that shows whether the person is skilful or not, but his very character communicates itself to the wires, and shows itself in the movements of the needles.'

'How strange!—and it is really possible?'

'That in a man's movements much of his character is shown, you will allow. Well, as he takes hold of the handles to work the telegraph, he does it in a way corresponding with his own particular individuality. That is communicated to the wires, and here on the dial-plate I see the inner man before me. The person I just mentioned is a very good fellow, but cautious, undecided—never sure whether what he does will be quite right or not. He is always hesitating; as soon as his hand touches the instrument, I know it is he instantly. There go the needles slowly from one side to the other, as if not quite certain about going across or not; they never go back suddenly, but always take their time, and move right or left hesitatingly, and with no decided swing. It is as like the man who is moving them as it is possible to be. It is quite a reflex of his mind: there is the impress of him exactly as he is. And it is very natural it should be so. The least hesitation or doubt communicates itself involuntarily to the hands as you hold the handles working the telegraph; and so fine and sympathetic is the conducting power—so sensitive are the wires—that every passing shade of feeling is felt by them. On the dial-plate it is all betrayed. Just as the mind of him at the other end of the wire is wavering, exactly so the needles are wavering too. Now he feels more sure; and yet that very same instant the change that has gone on within him is marked there also: the needles swing directly with sudden decision.'

'This is really very interesting,' I said; 'and it is besides, to me at least, a new wonder connected with electric communication. That one should be able to talk with a person a hundred miles off, as if they were both face to face, is certainly extraordinary; but that the affections of the mind and their sudden varyings should be instantaneously transmitted such a distance—perhaps even before the individual himself was aware of them—this is assuredly very much more wonderful!'

'It is not,' he continued, 'in the manner of delivering a communication only that you discover the sort of person with whom you have to do. The way in which he receives yours is also very indicative. One, slow of thought, will let you give the whole word; while another, of quick comprehension, and of a bolder nature, will give the sign, "I understand," at the first letters. The very jerk too, which signifies that you know what

is meant, is given by one with a decided, sure, firm knock; while with another, of a hesitating character, the needles seem to be hesitating too!'

'Just now,' said I, 'while you were receiving a message, I observed that every now and then you gave an unusually strong jerk—much stronger than the others. What did that mean?'

'Oh,' said he, laughing, 'that was an indignant "Understand!"' The other was stopping to see if I knew well what he had said, and I showed, by my manner of saying yes, that I was out of patience with his distrust. Such an "Understand," given in that brusque manner, is not exactly very civil: but I really can't help it—one gets at last out of patience with such dawdling.'

'And will the other, think you, understand that his questions and slowness put you out of patience?'

'No doubt of that. I knew he understood the way I answered him, and was sulky about it, for his manner changed directly. In the way I said "I understand," was expressed besides, "Of course I understand! Do get on, can't you, and don't stop to ask such foolish questions!"' That is what we call an indignant "understand!"

All this interested me much; and we talked on, now about a favourite author lying on the table, now of this thing, now of that, only interrupted occasionally by the click-click of the mahogany case, that, like a something endowed with life, was calling its attendant to come to it, and take heed. But while there, as one in presence of some demoniac thing, the telegraph exercised a sort of spell over me; and I always recurred to it, much as our conversation on other matters would have pleased me at any other time.

'You must not leave the telegraph for a moment?'

I observed, 'There must be always some one here to watch it, and be in readiness?'

'Yes; I or my brother remain here always. We take it by turns. Night and day he or I am here. He is gone to-day some miles off; so I have taken his watch for him. I was on duty before; to-night, therefore, will be the third night I have been up!'

'It must be very fatiguing for you; besides, you cannot venture to doze a little, lest something should happen.'

'Though I were to do so, if the wires began to move, I should awake directly. I cannot tell you *how* or *why* it is, but if there is the slightest tremor, I am sensible of it at once. Whether I hear it or feel it, I do not exactly know; but I am sensible that they are moving!'

'By intense watchfulness, by constant companionship with that animate yet lifeless thing, a sort of sympathy, or magnetic influence—call it what you will—may exist between you and it,' I observed.

'It may be so,' he replied; 'but really I cannot say. The strain of attention that all occupation with the telegraph produces is very great. While reading off the communications just given, your mind is on the stretch. The intentness of observation with which you must follow the needles in their movements is very fatiguing. There is nothing hardly that demands such minute attention; for a slight mistake, and you lose the thread of the meaning, and this directly causes delay. Besides which, you get confused.'

'This constant state of excitement must, I should think, at last make itself felt. It would be highly interesting to observe the influence it would exercise. Now, in yourself, have you,' I asked, 'remarked that any change has taken place since you have been occupied with the telegraph—that you are more irritable and excitable than before—or that the constant tension in which the faculties are kept has at all affected you?'

'I think it has made me more excitable than I was before. It certainly has an effect upon the nerves. The vibration of the needles, for example, I should hear much farther off than you would—so far, indeed, that you would think it scarcely credible.'

'Besides the constant attention and the night-watching, I have no doubt that the incessant, quick, uncertain motion of the needles backwards and forwards, and from side to side—that constant tremulousness which you are obliged to observe and to follow so closely—must tend to irritate.'

'Yes,' he replied, 'I daresay it is so. At night, however, one is seldom interrupted. Towards morning the foreign mails arrive, and then the despatches for the newspapers have to be transmitted. This takes about a couple of hours or more close, uninterrupted work. When a correspondence continues thus long without a break, it is very tiring for the mind. As soon as it is over, all has to be written down in a book: this is the most uninteresting part of our occupation. Every message, important or not, is entered in a journal, and then, from time to time,\* the accounts and money received are sent in, and the journals at the different offices compared, to see that all is right. All this is tiresome enough, but it must be done.'

'In this way you hear all the foreign news before any one else. When the first morning edition appears, to you it is already stale. I wonder, though, that persons who have anything secret and important to transmit, should like to trust their secret to two individuals wholly unknown to them.'

'Oh, there is no fear of our divulging anything,' he replied. 'Get something out of an electric-telegraph clerk if you can! Besides, we are forced to the strictest secrecy; bound, too, in a good round sum of money,† which we must deposit as security. There is nothing to be got out of us, I can assure you. It would never do if it were otherwise; for often matters of very great importance are forwarded in this way, and the confidence placed in us must be entire, and our secrecy above even suspicion.'

He afterwards showed me his dwelling. Close to the office was a sitting-room, and opposite this the kitchen, &c. Above stairs were the bedrooms; and though all was on a small scale, the arrangements were as comfortable as one could wish. I observed this to my new acquaintance, and that all was neat and well planned.

'Yes,' he answered, 'it is so. The company have not been sparing in making us comfortable. All is as nice as we could desire it to be. It is really very necessary, however, that it should be so; for, being obliged to be always here ready and on the watch, one could hardly do without these little comforts. My brother and I are happy enough together.'

'I should think,' I observed, 'the employment must have much in it that is pleasant—a charm peculiar to itself?'

'You are right,' he said; 'at first it possessed an indescribable charm. There was something mysterious about it; and it was with a strange feeling, unlike anything I had ever known, that I used to find myself holding converse with others far off, and watching, as it were, their countenances in the dial-plate. But the novelty over, all this died away; and though I still like the employment, it is no longer invested with its original charm.'

'Were you long in learning to work? I inquired.

'Not very long—it is not so difficult; but it takes a long time before you are able to read the communications sent to you—that is to say, quickly and easily. The speed with which a message is conveyed depends much on the person receiving it; for if he is quick and clever, he will understand what the words are before they are spelled to the end; and so, meeting the other, as it were, half-way, the communication is carried on with great rapidity.'

Here the hammer of the alarm, which, before

we went into the other room, had been set, began making a tremendous noise.

'Ha!' said I, 'some one is about to speak with you.'

We went to the door of the little parlour, and looked into the office at the needles. They were moving backwards and forwards with their usual click-click.

'Is it for you?' I asked.

'Yes,' he replied; 'so many times to the right, and so many times to the left, that signifies — station.'

'What is it about?' I inquired, as I watched the two needles, which, by their different movements over the small segment of a circle, expressed everything.

'It's about the down-train to-morrow. We are to send up some carriages.'

'And where is it from?'

'From the chief station in town.'

The needles soon moved again.

'Is it still the people in London who are speaking?'

'No; now it is the — station.'

I now had an opportunity of seeing how quickly my companion read the movements of the needles. Incessantly came the jerk, meaning 'I understand;' again and again at quickly-repeated intervals. Once there was an unusual movement, and I afterwards inquired what it meant.

'It meant,' he replied, "'Say that once more." I could not make out what was said; and, just as I imagined, the other clerks had made a mistake.'

Now came the answer; and it was astonishing how quickly it was delivered. As one's words pour out of the mouth in speaking, so here they were poured forth by handful. How the needles rushed backwards and forwards, then halted! now came a quick shake, and then off they dashed to the side with a bold decided swing! There was no hesitation here. Rattle, rattle, rattle; right, left, right: on it went without a pause; and soon the people at — had got their answer from the snug little parlour at the — station.

The evening had closed in, and there I still sat over the fire. A fire—a coal-fire in an English grate has a wonderful attraction for an Englishman who has been a long time from his old home. This was the case with myself; and therefore it was, I suppose, that I hung about the hearth as one does about a spot that is fraught with pleasant recollections. It was quiet, and cheerful, and cozy. Presently the clicking noise was heard again.

'Ah, ah! it is from the — station,' said my companion, rising. 'It is a friend of mine who is speaking,' he continued. 'He wants to know if I shall come up next Sunday or not. "I—don't—think—I shall,"' he said, repeating the words he was expressing by the wires. 'He asks me if "I am alone." "No—a—friend—is—here—with—me."'

'I am glad you have somebody with you, and are not alone, for it is most confoundedly dull,' came back in reply.

'Almost every evening,' said my companion, 'we have a little chat before-night comes on. He does not like being alone, so he talks with me.'

'Who have you got with you?' asked the friend so lonesome at the — station.

'No—one—you-know'—was the answer.

'I tell you what,' I said, laughing, 'I'll give him a riddle. Ask him, from me, "When did Adam first use a walking-stick?"'

'When Eve presented him with a little Cain (came),' came back as reply almost directly.

'Confound the fellow!' I exclaimed; 'I am sure he knew it before; and we both laughed heartily.'

'Confound—the-fellow—I'm-sure—he-knew-it—before'—repeated my companion by means of the wires.

'Look at the needles,' I said; 'how they are moving!'

\* Every month, I believe.

† If I remember rightly, L.500.



'Yes, he is laughing,' he replied; 'that means laughing! He is laughing heartily!'

Shake! shake! shake! shake! We laughed too in return by telegraph, just as we were then doing in reality. Another hearty laugh came back, with a 'Good-night!' We wished 'Good-night' in return, and our bit of chat was over.

And soon after, bidding my friend a good-night too, I left him to pass the long hours till morning in companionship with that wonderful thing, which, though lifeless, was so sensitive, and though inanimate, could yet make itself heard by him who was appointed its watcher; its low yet audible vibrations being as the pulsations of a heart that at intervals, by its faint beating, gives sign of vitality.

#### A NOVEL OF THE SEASON.

ALTHOUGH romantic fiction is the most universally-popular of all the numerous departments of art, there seems to be a widely-spread conspiracy abroad to keep it down to a mere mercenary trade. It receives no fostering but in the shape of pounds, shillings, and pence—and even this, it is said, to a very niggardly amount in these last days; and if at any time a critic ventures to measure it by the rules of his craft, and to regard the work under consideration as a whole, he is immediately met by an outcry from the publishers. These gentlemen—taking them of course as a body, and without minding the exceptions—appear to derive but little mental profit from the materials in which they deal. Their notion is, that to develop the story of a novel, in order to examine its artistic merits, is a kind of robbery: they would have the critic present to the public some beautiful bricks as a specimen of the building, but by no means analyse its nature and proportions. They think that two or three descriptive columns will damage irremediably their two or three volumes: for who will care to send for the book to the library when he already knows how the plot is concocted, and that the heroine is married after all? It is true the great standard works, of which edition after edition comes pouring from the press, are well known to everybody both in their story and characters; but unless the novels of the season contain mysteries to attract the curiosity—they will not sell.

It would be easy to show that even as regards the mere fact this is quite erroneous. The plot of a novel which excites any attention at all, is publicly known and commented on within a few days after publication; and the book is not read the less on that account, but the more. We do not go to the theatre to find out the dénouement of a play, but to derive pleasure from the skill with which a known dénouement is brought out. We have all, even the most ignorant, an intuitive feeling that the story or the comedy is a work of art subjected to our criticism; and our silent comments, our tears, our laughter, or our clapping of hands, are all tokens that we understand the privileges and duties of our office.

But the notion we allude to is far worse than a mistake, for it shows the utter indifference that prevails respecting the advancement of the beautiful department of art in question. The publishers desire their novels to sell on the instant of publication, before their real merits or demerits are known, and they look upon those therefore as enemies who deprive them of the supposed advantage of mystery. When the season is over, a work of the kind has no more odour to their senses than a primrose after spring. They are quite satisfied if the crop has been successful, and look to a new crop for next season. The analogies of the other departments of literature are lost upon them, and romantic fiction

is to remain a mere toy of fashion—a mere pastime of mental indolence, in *secula seculorum*.

The majority of reviewers on their part are very ready to take the cue from the publishers, partly because the latter supply them with books, and partly because the plan imposed upon them is far easier than a comprehensive criticism. They have too much knowledge and reflection to believe in a fallacy which would throw down romantic fiction from its place in high art; but the fallacy is convenient, and to uphold it prudent, and thus we find many persons who have assumed the name of critics closing their series of extracts from a popular novel with the declaration, that they would consider it unfair to unveil the mystery of the plot! Under such patronage, it is no wonder that novels of the season rarely deserve any other fate than to die and be forgotten when the season is over. Once in an age a genius like Scott may appear to fulfil the conditions of art by mere inspiration, unable to describe or comprehend the process by which he works; but to form a school of cultivation, and thus elevate the department to its true place in literature, is impossible under present circumstances. Great writers must go on as heretofore, lavishing their powers each on a single province—some acquiring a reputation in design, some in character, some in moral colouring, some in material colouring—but none achieving or even attempting a work of high art; and small writers, who cannot boast of distinction as regards anything in particular, must be satisfied, as usual, with being included in the chit-chat of a month, and receiving the congratulations of their acquaintances as the authors of a novel of the season.

As a type of the individuals on whom this injustice falls heaviest, we take the author of 'Olive.'\* We dealt with her work of last year with a careful though unsparing hand; because, with all its faults, we saw in it the germs of something noble. This young woman, enveloped in the anonymous veil, rising in the midst of the clamorous crowd of the metropolis to give the world a touch of her quality, appeared to us to be distinguished by a feeling of art which we looked for in vain among the great majority of her more experienced competitors. She appeared to have expended some thought upon the work she had undertaken; to have considered it as a thing to be compounded of various and harmonious parts, and not as a mere vehicle for display in some province peculiarly her own; to have looked upon it as an essay in art which—with an author's presumption, but hiding her face as a woman—she was about to hang up in the great gallery of literature for public inspection as a picture, as a whole. This fixed our attention upon the artist, and although 'The Ogilvies' passed away, as a matter of course, with the season, we were curious to know what she would do next. She has done just what we hoped. 'Olive' is not an aspiration, but a performance: it is a work of art, with not a few shortcomings, and even deformities, but still a work of art; and notwithstanding the low and mercenary feelings that surround her like an atmosphere in the business of literature, and the deprivation in which she must live of all bold and generous sympathies, we are entitled, from the growing principle of vitality we discern in her creations, to indulge the dream that they will be and by, in spite of the evil influences of the time, cease to be reckoned as novels of the season, or novels of the generation.

We presume to term 'Olive' a work of art, because of the unity of purpose, and subordination of parts to the general effect, which are distinctly visible throughout: a condition recognised as imperative in all other departments of art—in music, painting, sculpture, architecture—as well as in romantic fiction. The heroine, in whom is embodied the author's thought, is

\* Olive, a Novel, by the Author of 'The Ogilvies.' 3 vols. London: Chapman and Hall. 1850.

a portrait of woman, an exponent of the functions, beauty, and power of the sex, completely irrespective of material circumstances. But here the fixedness of the author's idea, the earnestness of her zeal in its development, even while proclaiming her a true artist, leads her into a transgression of the rules of art. Olive, in order that she may owe nothing to externals, in order that the divorcement between moral and physical beauty may be complete, is *deformed*: a manifest error, for art is careful not to degrade nature. She might have been ungraceful; she might have been plain to excess; she might have been pale to sickness; but the moment the line of ordinary, natural symmetry is broken, she is removed out of the circle of our poetical sympathies, to which she can only be restored—if restored at all—by slow and painful efforts. The author, as she proceeded in her task, became conscious of this; for the deformity diminishes as the young girl grows older, as the time approaches when her spiritual charms are to awaken human love; and towards the close of the narrative, it is alluded to rarely and slightly as something that had better be forgotten.

But this defect is only recognised to be such at the period of life we have alluded to; before then, it is productive of many striking and beautiful effects, which the critic may regret were not brought out in a more legitimate manner, but which the general reader accepts without question. Olive's mother is a weak beauty, who dotes on her scarcely less weak and equally beautiful husband, and looks upon the child, when it comes, as the future peacemaker between her and the haughty family in which she is a hitherto unacknowledged intruder. In her imagination it is to have a something of Angus's likeness and something of her own; or, in other words, the baby is to be the beau ideal of a child; and the scene in which the terrible truth is disclosed to the young mother by the nurse and doctor is finely wrought. This is the conclusion:—

"She shall be christened after our English fashion, doctor, and her name shall be Olive. What do you think of her now? Is she growing prettier?"

The doctor bowed a smiling assent, and walked to the window. Thither Elsie followed him.

"Ye maun tell her the truth—I daurna. Ye will?" and she clutched his arm with eager anxiety. "An' oh, for God's sake, say it saftly, kindly! Think o' the puir mither."

He shook her off with an uneasy look. He had never felt in a more disagreeable position.

Mrs. Rothesay called him back again. "I think, doctor, her features are improving. She will certainly be a beauty. I should break my heart if she were not. And what would Angus say? Come; what are you and Elsie talking about so mysteriously?"

"My dear madam—hem!" began Dr. Johnson. "I do hope—indeed I am sure—your child will be a good child, and a great comfort to both her parents!"

"Certainly; but how grave you are about it."

"I have a painful duty—a very painful duty," he replied; but Elsie pushed him aside—

"Ye're just a fule, man! Ye'll kill her. Say your say at ance!"

The young mother turned deadly pale. "Say what, Elsie? What is he going to tell me? Angus?"

"No, no, my darlin' leddy; your husband's safe;" and Elsie flung herself on her knees beside the chair. "But the bairnie—dinna fear, for it's the will o' God, and a' for gude, nae doubt—the sweet wee bairnie is—"

"Is, I grieve to say it, deformed!" added Dr. Johnson.

The poor mother gazed incredulously on him, on the nurse, and lastly on the sleeping child. Then, without a word, she fell back, and fainted in Elsie's arms.

This child is born during the father's absence; and when he at length returns, the weak mother is filled with shame and terror as the moment approaches when she must present to him his first-born. The presentation is the ground of a quarrel. The weak Mrs. Rothesay had deceived her husband throughout as to the deformity; and in reproaching her with the *lie*, his masculine weakness has some occupation which renders the blow less stunning. Love, confidence, respect between the wedded pair, are at an end, or at least at the beginning of the end; and Olive, neglected by both, and left to the impulses of her heart and genius, acted upon by the external forms and teaching voices of nature in the solitude in which they lived, grows up a gentle, thoughtful, loving, melancholy child.

The deformed child was *felt* in this disappointed family; she was almost the sole tie between father and mother. "Little Olive was growing almost a woman now, but she was called 'little Olive' still. She retained her diminutive stature, together with her girlish dress, but her face wore, as ever, its look of premature age. And as she sat between her father and mother, now helping the one in her delicate fancy-work, now arranging the lamp for the other's reading, continually in request by both, or, when left quiet for a minute, watching both with anxious earnestness, there was quite enough in Olive's manner to show that she had entered on a woman's life of care, and had not learned a woman's wisdom one day too soon." Captain Rothesay's temper becomes harsh and peremptory; the estrangement between him and his wife increases; and the announcement of his ruin produces a scene in which Olive acts as the good angel. "This night—and not for the first time either—the little maiden of fifteen might have been seen acting with the energy and self-possession of a woman, soothing her mother's hysterical sufferings, smoothing her pillow, and finally watching by her until she fell asleep. Then Olive crept down stairs, and knocked at her father's study door. He said, 'Come in,' in a dull, subdued tone. She entered, and saw him sitting, his head on his hand, jaded and exhausted, leaning over the last embers of the fire, which had gone out without his noticing it. . . . The father turned round again, and looked into his daughter's eyes. Perhaps he read there a spirit equal to and not unlike his own—a nature calm, resolute, clear-sighted; the strong will and decision of a man united to the tenderness of a woman. From that hour father and daughter understood one another."

Olive at length comes into society. She mixes with the young, the fair, and the happy, and has an instinctive consciousness that she is different from all. She fancies that she is merely not beautiful, and the thought is painful, for Olive is an artist by nature, and a born worshipper of beauty. She goes to a ball, and no one leads her out to the dance—no one but her lonely friend Sara. Surely there is something more that causes this distinction? Some words of a conversation fell upon her ear that painfully aroused her curiosity: the question is asked, and is carefully, tenderly, caressingly answered—but still answered, and Olive knows that she is deformed.

The effect upon the gentle but firm-minded girl is to withdraw still more her thoughts from herself, and to devote her affections and sympathies to others. The father, who had spurned the deformed infant, now falls gradually under her tender sway, and the intemperate habits into which his misery drives him are awed and repressed by the meek looks of his daughter. She is the mother of her weak mother, whom she habitually terms 'darling,' as she counsels, guides, and impels her. At her father's death, the orphan girl is the protector of the widow; and passing away from the scenes hallowed by duty and affliction, they seek together a new abiding-place upon the earth.

They are now in the environs of London, tenanted

the house of a painter and his sister—two characters drawn with masterly power. 'He was a most extraordinary-looking man, was Mr Vanbrugh. Olive had, indeed, delicately called him "not handsome," for you probably would not see an uglier man twice in a lifetime. Gigantic and ungainly in height, and coarse in feature, he certainly was the very antipodes of his own exquisite creations.' His attention is attracted by the still beautiful widow—not as a woman, but as a form made to be painted. "Madam," said he, "I want a Grecian head. Yours just suits me. Will you oblige me by sitting?" And then adding, as a soothing and flattering encouragement, "It is for my great work—my 'Alcestis'—one of a series of six pictures which I hope to finish one day!" He tossed back his long iron-gray hair, and his eyes, lighted with wild genius, scanned curiously the lighted creature, whom he had hitherto noticed only with the usual civilities of an acquaintanceship consequent on some months' residence in the same house.' In this house Olive sees the development of a principle which had existed within her from infancy: she becomes a painter; and with her first earnings she pays a debt of her deceased father, which is destined to have an important effect upon her own fortunes. Then came the total deprivation of Mrs Rothesay's sight; but so gradually, that it 'caused no despondency; and the more helpless she grew, the closer she was clasped by those supporting arms of filial love, which softened all pain, supplied all need, and were to her instead of strength, youth, eyesight!' But they are happy in the midst of all—even cheerful; 'for cheerfulness, originally foreign to Olive's nature, had sprung up there—one of those heart-flowers which love, passing by, sows according as they are needed, until they bloom as though indigenous to the soil. To hear Miss Rothesay laugh, as she was laughing just now, you would have thought she was the merriest creature in the world, and had been so all her life. Moreover, from this blithe laugh, as well as from her happy face, you might have taken her for a young maiden of nineteen, instead of a woman of six-and-twenty, which she really was. But with some natures, after youth's first sufferings are passed, life's dial seems to run backward.'

Vanbrugh at length determined to remove to Italy, and on the occasion he made a proposal to Olive which startled and astonished her. This man, whose enthusiasm had inspired her with 'a delight almost like terror, for it made her shudder and tremble as though within her own poor frame was that Pythian effluence, felt, not understood—the spirit of Genius:' this man proposed to make his scholar his wife.

"Miss Rothesay," said he, "I wish to talk to you as to a sensible and noble woman (there are such I know, and such I believe you to be). I also speak as to one like myself—a true follower of our divine art, who to that one great aim would bend all life's purposes, as I have done."

He paused a moment, and seeing that no answer came, continued—

"All these years you have been my pupil, and have become necessary to me and to my art. To part with you is impossible; it would change all my plans and hopes. There is but one way to prevent this. You are a woman: I cannot take you for my son, but I can take you for—my wife!"

Utterly astounded, Olive listened like one in a dream. "Your wife—I—your wife!" was all she murmured.

"Yes!" he cried, still not changing the firm, grave, dignified tone in which he had spoken. "I ask you—not for my own sake, but for that of our noble art. I am a man long past my youth—perhaps even a stern, rude man. I cannot give you love, but I can give you glory. Living, I can make of you such an artist as no woman ever was before; dying, I can bequeath to you

the immortality of my fame. Answer me—is this nothing?"

On Olive's refusal, he looks at her with a stern, cold pride, but no passion:—

"As you will—as you will. I thought you a great-souled kindred genius; I find you a mere woman. Jest on at the old fool with his gray hairs—go and wed some young, gay!"

"Look upon me!" said Olive, with a mournful meaning in her tone; "is such a one as I likely to marry?"

"I have spoken ill," said Vanbrugh in a touched and humbled voice. "Nature has mocked us both: we ought to deal gently with one another. Forgive me, Olive!"

This is not the only offer of marriage Olive has. When she is verging towards the scarcely poetical age of thirty, she is addressed by a handsome and wealthy young man, over whom she has exercised a kind of fascination ever since his boyhood. Olive is still more surprised than by the former declaration. She cannot at first comprehend him:—

"Forgive me," she said. "All this is so strange; you cannot really mean it. It is utterly impossible that you can love me. I am old compared with you; I have no beauty; nay, even more than that"—Here she paused, and her colour sensitively rose.

"I know what you would say," quickly added the young man; "but I think nothing of it—nothing! To me you are, as I said, like an angel. I have come here to-day on purpose to tell you so—to ask you to share my riches, and teach me to deserve them. Dearest Miss Rothesay, listen to me, and be my wife!"

While destined to disappoint others, she is herself—this deformed girl—the victim of a love attachment which consumes her for years. And here the author has carried to excess that principle of contrast which rules in the sister art, and which may be seen by everybody in the pictures of Turner. Harold Gwynne, cold, stern, almost repulsive in manner, a clergyman, and yet conscientiously an infidel, is the object of Olive's hopeless passion. He has no attraction but beauty, and that aspect of lofty and lonely virtue which formed the charm of the ancient sages, ere human wisdom was warmed and enlightened by a religion which throws the sunlight of heaven upon the human character. This is the man whom the soft, loving, genial, pious Olive has singled from the world, and towards whom she has felt a kind of mystical gravitation even from the moment when her first earnings were devoted to the repayment of a debt of honour contracted to his family by her father. We cannot praise the sentimental conversion of the infidel priest, or the prudence which, without any conceivable necessity, thus tampers with holy things in the pages of a novel; but such matters admitted, there are both grace and power exhibited in the gradual approach of two beings so different, till their whole natures are blended and molten into one.

It is not external circumstances that keep them asunder, and form the embroglio of the story, but internal misgivings. Olive condemns as fantastic and absurd the wild hope that every now and then springs up in her woman's heart, the hope of things impossible—to her; and Harold, already past his youth, and conscious of no lovable qualities, is fortified by pride, and the stern resolve of his character, against the evidence of tokens that would have been only too obvious to a meaner spirit. This is not unnatural, even considering the relative circumstances of the pair; for the moment a man loves, all material inequalities vanish, and his mistress—were she a peasant girl—is raised from the common earth, and stands upon a pedestal.

The death of her mother increases her loneliness; and the addresses of another suitor, young and wealthy,



to whom she had appeared an angel from the dreams of his very boyhood, may be supposed to have relieved her from the haunting sense of her own incapability of inspiring passion. But as she advanced in self-confidence, the object of her idolatrous attachment grew greater and nobler. 'Never did any woman think less of herself than Olive Rothesay; yet as she stood twisting up her beautiful hair, she felt glad that it *was* beautiful. Once she thought of what Marion had told her about some one saying she was "like a dove." Who said it? Not Harold—that was impossible. Arranging her dress, she looked a moment, with half-mournful curiosity, at the pale, small face reflected in the mirror. "Ah no! there is no beauty in me. Even did he care for me, I could give him nothing but my poor, lowly woman's heart. I can give him that still. There is something sweet and holy in pouring round him this invisible flood of love. It must bring some blessing on him yet; and despite all I suffer, the very act of loving is blessedness to me!"

As a specimen of the self-torture this shrinking sensitiveness inflicts, we give the following conclusion to one of their conversations:—

"But," said Harold, his voice hoarse and trembling, "what if they should live on thus for years, and never marry. What if he should die?"

"Die!"

"Yes. If so, far better that he should never have spoken—that his secret should go down with him to the grave."

"What! you mean that he should die, and she never know that he loved her! Oh, Heaven! what misery could equal that!"

'As Olive spoke, the tears sprang into her eyes, and, utterly subdued, she stood still and let them flow.

'Harold, too, seemed strangely moved, but only for a moment. Then he said, very softly and quietly, "Miss Rothesay, you speak like one who feels every word. These are things we learn in but one school. Tell me, as a friend, who night and day prays for your happiness, are you not speaking from your own heart? You love, or you have loved?"

'For a moment Olive's senses seemed to reel. But his eyes were upon her—those truthful, truth-searching eyes. "Must I look in his face and tell him a lie?" was her half-frenzied thought. "I cannot, I cannot! And he will never, never know!"

'She bowed her head, and answered in a low, heart-broken murmur, one word—"Yes!"

"And with a woman like you, to love once is to love for evermore?"

'Again Olive bent her head speechlessly—and that was all. There was a sound as of crushed leaves, and those with which Harold had been playing fell scattered on the ground. He gave no other sign of emotion or sympathy.'

But all this is in due time at an end. Some accident always occurs—a storm, a shipwreck, a fire, a fall: anything will do (and novel-writers, knowing that originality is now out of the question, take anything that comes to hand) to break asunder the chains of conventionalism, and give speech to the heart, soul, senses. In this case Harold speaks from a bed of almost fatal sickness, and he speaks briefly:—"There was a brief silence, and then Olive, gliding from her seat, knelt beside the couch where Harold lay. She tried to speak—she tried to tell him the story of her one great love, so hopeless, yet so faithful—so passionate, yet so dumb. But she could utter nothing save the heart-bursting cry—"Harold! Harold!" And therein he learned all.

The last picture, contained in the last lines of the book, is this:—

'They walked on a long way, even climbing to the summit of the Braid Hills. The night was coming on fast—the stormy night of early winter—for the wind had risen, and swept howling over the heathery ridge.

"But I have my plaid here, and you will not mind the cold, my lassie—Scottish born," said Harold to his wife. And in his own cheek, now brown with health, rose the fresh mountain-blood, while the bold mountain-spirit shone in his fearless eyes. No marvel that Olive, stealing beside him, looked with pride to her noble husband, and thought that not in the whole world was there such another man!

"I glory in the wind," cried Harold, tossing back his head, and shaking his wavy hair, something lion-like. "It makes me strong and bold. I love to meet it, to wrestle with it; to feel myself in spirit and in frame, stern to resist, daring to achieve, as a man should feel!"

'And on her part Olive, with her clinging sweetness, her upward gaze, was a type of true woman. But Harold did not bend his look upon her; he was just then in the mood when a great man needs no human intervention—not even a wife's—between him and the aspirations which fill his soul.

"I think," he cried, "that there is a full, rich life before me yet. I will go forth and rejoice therein; and if misfortune come, I will meet it—thus!"

'He planted his foot firmly on the ground, lifted his proud head, and looked out fearlessly with his majestic eyes.

"And I," said Olive, "thus!"

'She stole her two little cold hands under his plaid, laid her head upon them, close to his heart, and, smiling, nestled there.

'And the loud, fierce wind swept by, but it harmed not them, thus warm and safe in love. So they stood, true man and woman, husband and wife, ready to go through the world without fear, trusting in each other, and looking up to Heaven to guide their way.'

The reader will perceive that he has here the story of a Model Woman, not owing her power to superficial or sensuous attractions, but to the high, holy, and yet simple character of her mind and affections. This is what we have called a work of art; and we think we have in some sort justified ourselves in so doing, although compelled to omit even the names of several of the most interesting and important personages in the piece. But still our sketch is more of the nature than of the plan of the work, and the reader will have to fancy the thousand natural incidents that form the links of a narrative which he will perhaps consent, with surprise and regret at the necessity, to term a Novel of the Season.

## INFLUENCE.

We have been impressed with a remark which we recently met in the published correspondence of Bishop Shirley; namely, 'The view of life which deepens on my mind daily is, that its very essence is influence; the nature and degree of our influence on others is the measure of our own existence, and power intellectual or spiritual; and have been led by it into a train of cogitation as to what influence is, and on what it may be deemed founded.

It might be generalising matters too much to describe mankind as divided into the two classes of those who lead, and those who are led; and yet if we look around, we shall discover such to be in a great measure the case; the exceptions, namely, of such as are unsusceptible of influence one way or the other, commonly pertaining to individuals of neutral character. We deem the preceding axiom of the worthy bishop's, or the right reverend divine's, or at least the remark that follows,\* to lean perhaps too hardly on the class of those who are the recipients, not the directors, of the

\* See 'Memoirs of the late Bishop of Sodor and Man,' p. 316.

propelling power in question; for they may be persons of worth nevertheless, and have a mission of usefulness in their own way to fulfil.

A curious subject of speculation might at the outset be started, as to whether men or women have in general had most influence, and which have most ambitiously aspired to obtain it?—a question which at all events, as regards the history of private life in opposition to the great political arena of public events, we should be inclined to decide in favour of the female sex. But from what does influence itself spring? We desire to analyse the principle on which rests the ascendancy of mind over mind.

The most commonly adopted theory is that which has been transmitted to us in the well-known reply of Leonore de Galigai, who observed that 'she had used no other sorcery than that influence which a strong mind will ever have over a weak one'; and a corresponding declaration might have been made by the celebrated Duchess of Marlborough as to the nature of the control she exercised over the weak-minded Anne. This is resolving influence on its highest grounds. Decision of character is in fact the greatest moral lever that can be wielded: it clears a way for itself amidst opposition, and it is wonderful to see how feeble minds fall back, and instinctively give place to the master-spirit. The highest order of minds, we contend, are not subject to be thus acted upon. Possessed in themselves of those grand elements of quick penetration, firmness of purpose, and promptitude in action, which are so useful in steering one's passage through life, they are all-sufficient to manage the helm themselves, and need not to repose on the guidance of others.

We deem that the question of mental ascendancy has been too uniformly disposed of on the preceding hypothesis, or, as in common parlance, the phrase goes—the secret of all management is deemed to consist in great 'cleverness' on the one hand; the inference—frequently a false one—being, that the other party must necessarily be 'weak.'

It strikes us that other influences, not so readily taken into account, may be as often at work as this so frequently-predicated doctrine of 'a strong mind,' &c.: the principle of all apparently being, the consciousness of some deficiency in ourselves, and the perception of an abundant supply of it in another, we involuntarily seek to imbibe by contact, and, as it were, strengthen a weak part.

This may serve in a great degree to account for the likings of the unlike.\* We are both apt to affix a high value to gifts which we do not ourselves possess, and also in daily life will be found instinctively to cherish those who in any way conduce to our comfort or amusement. From this root of self-love, then, so inherent in the human breast, springs the influence which a mere capacity even to entertain will often give one individual over another. The dull or the weary man will make high account of him (or her) who shall succeed in pleasantly beguiling the passing hour; and such being the ability possessed by the young by reason of their good spirits—by the well-informed or witty who can daily strike out novelties in thought—nay, by the simply garrulous, who can always furnish small-talk—it is not strange that in the passive season of declining life especially, we should so often find that some favourite grandchild or companion, or even domestic, wholly obtains 'the ear,' as it is termed, of the person with whom they live.

This principle, which will be found to pervade mankind from the court to the cottage, forms a solution to the remarkable ascendancy which Madame de Maintenon, when no longer young, acquired over Louis XIV. When this monarch (who, by the way, is represented by the Duchess of Orleans in her 'Memoirs' to have

been singularly deficient in conversational talent) found himself at that age when 'the voice of singing men and singing women' no longer delights, and *blasé* with a long life of self-indulgence, it was an invaluable relief to him to be able to command the hourly association of an agreeable woman. Of Madame de Maintenon it might be said, as it was of an English lady of rank nearly her cotemporary,<sup>†</sup> that 'she was able to converse on every subject, from the *shearing* of silk to predestination;' but beside her colloquial powers, she exercised over the half-penitent, half-superstitious monarch a degree of spiritual control which formed in itself a separate ingredient of influence. She it was who urged him to acts of persecuting intolerance to his Protestant subjects as a fancied expiation for the sins of his past life; thus with the one hand administering opiates to lull his conscience, while with the other she presented cordials to revive his drooping spirits.

When we find history presenting us with a catalogue of names, male and female, of those who have figured as favourites to sovereigns, apparently without any adequate desert of their own, we conceive that the theory in question will afford a clue to the mystery. They supplied them with ideas, they enlivened the passing hour; though the peculiar talents which enabled them to do so have not of course been transmitted to us. Suffice it to know, that the effect was felt at the time. And such peculiar adaptation to the disposition of their royal masters was no doubt more the instrument by which Wolsey and the two Buckinghams worked their way at court, than by any question of abstract talent. The portrait transmitted to us of the first unfortunate duke of that name, favours our view by showing how exactly he, with his ardent, frank, daring nature, was suited to fill up the *hiatus*, as it were, in the character of the cautious, proud, and somewhat melancholy monarch; consequently the latter was soon led implicitly to lean on him. Again, in speaking of the sprightliness and elegant address of the queen, D'Israeli says—'Charles admired in Henrietta those personal graces which he himself wanted,'<sup>†</sup> &c. and the influence of this favourite wife has been generally received as matter of history. Yet in neither of these cases do we conceive there to have been any mental superiority in the parties exercising influence; and Charles, though not a strong-minded man *par excellence*, still hardly deserves to be called a weak one.

There is an ascendancy we may sometimes observe to exist, even where decision of character and talent are all on one side; namely, that of an imperturbably calm temper over a rash and violent one. If the reader's observation corresponds with ours, he will, we think, find corroboration of this remark in many a domestic circle around—only modifying the idea of passion to what may be termed impetuosity of temperament—and it will be found not unfrequently to exist in wedded life, where the one party, raised perhaps from obscure origin, brings nothing but worth and sweetness of temper to the possessor of worldly advantages, fine genius, and an irascible disposition. Here, again, let us take the common and now well-travelled-over ground of history. To what was the influence exercised over Peter the Great by his humbly-born wife attributable? To the uniform placidity of her temper, while his own was furious: in this all historians concur. Indeed, apart from the self-possession which Catherine displayed in the affair of Pruthi, we search in vain for any records of greatness of soul, or specific ability in any way that the empress possessed; and even her personal charms—an endowment that so often wields sway *per se*—have never been insisted on. Madame de Maintenon, alluded to above, is likewise known to have been a remarkably even-tempered woman, and

\* See No. 132 of this Journal.

\* Anne, Countess of Dorset, Pembroke, and Montgomery.

† 'Curiosities of Literature,' Charles I. and II. Henrietta.



the same well-wearing quality was a leading feature in the character of the celebrated Countess of Suffolk, who in the last century was so conspicuously distinguished as the favourite both of her royal master and mistress.

We believe that good temper, or at least the semblance of it, is essential in the long-run to the maintenance of female influence; the exceptions being where that influence, begun under particular circumstances, is continued, from force of habit, until a period when the yoke, though felt to be grievous, nevertheless cannot be shaken off. We have already adverted to the Duchess of Marlborough. Now her lively spirits, as *Sarah Jennings*, was in early life the precise quality suited as an antidote to her royal mistress's inanity. Anne needed in her young days rather to be excited than rocked to repose; but when, at a later period, the tyrannical rule of the favourite occasioned her downfall, we find her place supplied by the *good-tempered* Mrs Masham, whose ready obsequiousness was better adapted to soothe the declining years, as well as to minister to that love of the 'divine right' which to the last formed such a strong ingredient in the character of this last of the Stuarts.

There is a moral ascendancy founded simply on conviction of worth, and which commends itself to our appreciation by unswerving integrity, by recognition of attachment to our best interests. This was the noble away which the *virtuous* Sully held over the counsels of Henry IV. of France; and such was the nature of that holy spell which Fenelon cast about his pupil, when he attained over him an influence as remarkable as ever he depicted his own Mentor to have done over Telemachus.

In fine, influence, derivable from whatever source—and we have seen how the qualities of the head and the heart may be severally tributary—may be summarily defined, as to its effect, as a habit of making a certain individual our involuntary referee on every occasion, and deeming that his or her judgment must be 'the proper thing' by which to abide. And let it be added, that much frequently depends on the *prestige* that such individual bears about him: it is not always that our friend is pre-eminently clever, or judicious, or faithful, but 'tis 'our thinking makes it so.' In connection with this, let the force of habit be borne in mind; it is next to impossible to disabuse our minds as to the merits of a person who has long been the object of our regard, for the indolence of our nature renders us more disposed to abide by impressions already received—even if we begin to have a glimpse of their falsity—than to set out anew in search of truth. Thus influence will be commonly found to maintain its ground until driven out by a *stronger* influence—by one, for instance, in certain cases more adapted to some change in ourselves or our position.

The force of habit, and the prestige of instinctive reverence, combine most naturally—and it is right they should do so—in those whose relationship, &c. have given them, so to speak, an *ex officio* right of control over us. The very names my 'parent,' 'pastor,' 'master,' &c. convey to the ears of the young an impression that from the fiat of these sages there is no appeal, and their presumed superiority of judgment is deemed necessary to stamp propriety on every action. But when the period of pupilage is past, and the expanded importance of our position enables us successfully to resist any prolonged attempt at dictatorship, we become impatient at having others to think for us. Then it is that for parents or guardians, who would retain a moral influence over their young people after the right to coerce has passed away, it will be found of the last importance that their own disposition and abilities should be recognised to be of true metal, and bear to be 'weighed in the balance;' not merely deriving fictitious consequence in right of the office

they have filled. Where such is happily the case, the influence of friendship will often supervene to that of authority, and counsel be sought where it can no longer be obtruded. It is at the period when young persons are emancipated from direct control that the *interregnum* of influence is most apt to be filled up, and then a friend or wife frequently steps in to assume the post of permanent adviser. If the influence be for good, all is well; but let it ever be borne in recollection, with special reference to the case of the ductile-minded, that the human heart, almost as much as nature, 'abhors a vacuum;' and that the causes which we have endeavoured to trace will, we believe, be found to be of inevitable operation. To deduce from them, in this place, any caution as to the associations we should permit to those for whom we are interested, might seem too trite, and would come more under the department of the moralist than of the physiologist. It would likewise diverge from the immediate point at issue, which has reference to the art of maintaining influence, not to what may be the possible effects of it upon others. Our remarks, as it is, have been too much protracted; and we hasten to conclude them, after having given expression to our own opinion as to what the grand secret is in which all influence may be considered bound up. It is contained in that pithy advice of Lord Chesterfield to his son, 'MAKE YOURSELF WANTED;' and the individual possessing those mental requisites which most immediately tally with our 'wants,' will ever be found to be him who will in time acquire the most influential control over us.

#### THE CHRISTMAS TREE.

'Louisa, my love,' said Mrs Crawford, 'I don't at all like this method of yours, or rather want of method. It shows a sad fickle disposition never to finish what you have begun, but invariably to leave it for something new. Where are the slippers you were working for papa, and which you were so anxious to finish by Christmas-Eve?'

'In the chiffonnière, mamma. There is plenty of time. I have only the grounding to complete.'

'Then those warm winter mitts you began for Aunt Townsend. She would be very glad of them this frosty weather. You have had them in hand, I think, for more than a month.'

Louisa looked annoyed. 'I mean to finish them, mamma; but I am quite tired of hearing of them. I think you need not be so very particular. I only just want to do this new pattern of a *couvrette* before Emily Lawson leaves us.'

'I should not mind about it, Louisa, if this were a solitary instance. But I see the disposition perpetually manifested. If you suffer it to grow upon you, my dear, you will never do anything well. Then look at the waste of material! There are three or four unfinished pieces of rugwork of yours at this moment, thrust into different corners out of the way, faded and dirty from having lain about on chairs and sofas, and which I do not believe you will ever finish.'

Louisa, whose temper was by no means perfect, made a somewhat abrupt reply; and her mother, seeing that no further good could then be done with her, ceased to speak, and soon after left the room.

The *couvrette* took up much more time than the little girl had calculated upon—so much, that Emily Lawson was obliged to return home before she had seen her pupil safe through the intricacies of the pattern. But she left behind what she considered plain directions for its continuance and completion; which, however, proved so little intelligible without the personal superintendence of the instructor, that Louisa, after many fruitless trials, gave up the attempt in despair; and the unfortunate *crochet-work* was con-

signed, like many of its predecessors, to the oblivion of some work-table or chiffonnière.

It was now the Thursday before Christmas-Eve, which fell on a Monday. Louisa's brothers and sisters had all nearly prepared their little presents for each other and for papa and mamma, which were to be hung, labelled with the names of the persons for whom they were intended, to the grand Christmas Tree that was then to be exhibited. Louisa, less fortunate than they, was working in desperation at the only present she was at all likely to complete—the pair of slippers for papa.

'Louisa,' her mamma called from her little bedroom, 'come here before you do any more work, and arrange your drawers. I cannot allow you to leave them in such disorder.'

Louisa muttered an impatient exclamation, and obeyed; but in so hasty and passionate a manner, that her mamma remarked it, and desired her to be more gentle in her movements.

'There is no occasion to hurry, Louisa. You know that I do not like you to fuss about, as if you had all the business of the house upon your shoulders.'

'But I shall never have finished my slippers, mamma.'

'That is your own fault, my love. I told you what would be the consequence of your persisting in working at that couvrette.'

Louisa went discontentedly back again to her slippers, muttering to herself as she did so, 'I wish mamma would not be so neat. She might let me alone just till I had finished my present. How I do hate neatness and order!'

The Monday morning arrived, a joyful time to the little Crawfords, for every other occupation was laid aside that they might deck the Christmas Tree. A young fir-tree had been cut down for the purpose, and placed in a gaily-painted tub half filled with earth. Among the branches were numerous tiny tapers, fastened there ready for lighting at the time of exhibition. The children now, under the direction of their mamma, proceeded to hang oranges and apples by strings to some of the boughs, and to fasten among them bon-bons, gilded crackers, figs, bunches of raisins, and other such trifles. Then came the disposition of presents, chiefly their own handiwork, in conspicuous parts of the tree; and at this period of the proceedings mamma was requested to retire.

'Where is Louisa?' said little Emmeline. 'We want her present to hang up.'

'I will go and look for her,' said James. 'I am afraid she is in trouble. She was crying this morning; and when I asked what was the matter, she would not speak to me.'

Poor Louisa was sitting in a corner of the library, labouring at the grounding of the unfortunate slippers, the canvas on which she was working being so fine, that she could not, by the utmost exertion, advance more than one square in an hour. The tears were running down her face, dropping on the gay colours of the Berlin wool, and obstructing her gaze, so that she could scarcely see the stitches she wished to form.

'Dear Loo!' exclaimed her brother, running up to her, and throwing his arms round her neck, 'what is the matter? Are you ill? Is any one angry with you?'

Louisa wept more bitterly than before, and turned away from her would-be consoler. But James took her face gently between both his hands, and made her turn it towards him again, and drop the covering pocket-handkerchief.

'Come, dear Louisa, tell me, and I shall perhaps be able to help you?'

'No, my dear James,' sobbed the distressed child, 'you cannot help me. It is quite hopeless. I wish—I wish I had attended to what mamma said.'

'What is it, dear? Is it this work? You have only a little bit of this toe to finish.'

'That little bit, dear James, will take—Oh, so long! I shall not be in time with it, if I work every minute of the day. There will be no present of mine on the Christmas Tree.'

'Is that all, Louisa? We will soon manage that,' said James cheerfully. 'Say nothing about it. Wait until I come back, and I will soon supply you with a present or two for the Christmas Tree.'

He was hastening away, but Louisa stopped him. 'No, brother,' she said firmly; 'I will not be so mean as to take the credit of any present that is not really my own. It is my own fault delaying so long, and I will patiently bear the mortification I deserve.'

James remonstrated, but it was of no use. Louisa dried her tears. 'Come,' said she, 'the rest will be waiting for us.'

They were all very sorry when they heard the state of the case, and would have given up anything to console their sister. The Christmas Tree was at length complete, and the schoolroom in which it was placed was locked up until the evening.

'Now, dear papa,' said Harriet, who was a year older than Louisa, after a great many nods and signs had been exchanged between the children after tea, and James and Emmeline had been quietly in and out of the room several times—'now, papa, come, if you please.'

Mr Crawford good-humouredly allowed himself to be half dragged, half pushed by the exulting children into the schoolroom. There, with its dozens of tapers blazing merrily, giving the spiked branches that peculiar tint which they only assume by an artificial light, stood the Christmas Tree. The kind father of course made believe that he was much surprised, though the same thing had occurred to him for the last three years; and the younger children danced about and clapped their hands with delight, as he advanced towards the tree, and examined its decorations.

'For dear Papa,' he read on the label of a neat little box that was suspended from one of the principal boughs.

James blushed. He had a mechanical genius, and his father having on the last Christmas-Eve placed a small turning lathe and a neat assortment of tools beneath the shadow of the Christmas Tree, the boy had since made good use of them. His present to his father was a very handy little box, to place on Mr Crawford's writing-desk, for the purpose of holding steel pens, odd bits of sealing-wax, and so forth.

The children now began to look a little closer; for while their father pretended to be merely examining the tree, he was in reality feeling in his pockets for various trifles therein deposited; which he quietly placed on the earth inside the tub, as a kind of ornamental barrier round the tree.

'Stand off! you young rogues,' he playfully shouted, making a great demonstration of fists and squared elbows; 'stand off, until I have taken possession of my share of the good things.'

'Oh, papa! papa is eating all the figs!' cried one.

'There goes my great bunch of raisins,' shouted another. 'Me some!' begged little Willie, the youngest. 'Me some, papa!'

'Look here, Emmeline,' said Mr Crawford to his wife, who stood by enjoying the scene. 'Some fairy has procured you the very thing you wanted—a new sheath for your spectacles; and here is a pincushion; and there a bag—all for you.'

'Come away, papa—naughty papa,' cried the children, who were tired of remaining inactive spectators. 'Papa is doing everything.'

Papa was ousted from his prominent position, and then commenced a general distribution of the presents. Even little Willie had been able to contribute. With

his store of saved-up pennies he had walked with Harriet to the town on the previous Saturday, and there bought some pretty trifles for dear papa and mamma.

'Now let us look under the tree,' said mamma, when nothing remained on the branches but the tapers, and a few apples and oranges. 'Louisa, my love, the first present I meet with is labelled with your name.'

'Oh what a pretty box!' said the children. 'What is inside? Let me look.' 'And me.' 'And me.'

'Stop, my dears,' said their mamma; 'Louisa must open it herself.'

But Louisa did not seem in any hurry to move.

'Why don't you come forward to receive your present, my love?' inquired her father. 'It is a crochet and knitting-box, or whatever you call that work you are so fond of. I thought you would like something of the kind.'

Louisa blushed, and the tears stood in her eyes. 'Tell them, James,' she whispered, 'that I can't take it—I have given no present to anybody.'

When Mr Crawford knew how it was, he was very sorry; but he did not reprove Louisa just then, for her own sense of wrong was punishment enough, and he could not bear to see her young sorrowful face on that festive evening. All the children were made happy—each in his or her own way; and then they left the Christmas Tree in its native simplicity, with the remains of one or two dying tapers flickering among its branches.

The next morning was Christmas-Day, and no work was thought of; but the morning after—the children having no lessons that week—Louisa set herself with steady purpose to an undertaking she had planned in her own mind. Her mother coming into the school-room, found her in the midst of pieces of discarded rug and crochet-work, and skeins of knitting and crochet cotton, which she was sorting and folding up with the various pieces of work they were intended to complete.

'Mamma,' she said, rising and throwing her arms round her mother's neck, 'if I finish these, one by one, will you have hope of my amendment?'

'I shall indeed, my darling. By the time the last is completed, I trust you will have formed a habit of perseverance which will stand you in good stead all your life long.'

#### A TWELVEMONTH IN CALCUTTA.

CHARACTER OF THE NATIVES—PRESENTS FROM CLIENTS—VEGETATION OF THE PARK—SCENERY OF THE RAINS—LAUNCH OF A STEAMER—CALCUTTA SET-OUT—VENAL MARRIAGES—DOMESTICS.

*July 1st.*—Still, up to this day, at this pleasant place, where, however, our occupations are too unvaried to furnish much matter for the journal, which has, to confess the truth, been of late somewhat neglected. We walk, ride, or drive when the weather is dry enough to permit us to get out. In the house we read, write, work, draw, or play with the merry children. All our evenings are devoted to music—a tenor and a baritone have come out in the voice department—the basso cannot leave his office just now; but our violoncello and one violin are here, so we are really busy; and sitting honestly in judgment on one another, we are likely in the end to do our parts well, and get up for our admiring friends a very creditable concert.

*4th.*—Mr Black's sick partner, who, by the by, has got almost quite well, is an extremely intelligent man. He has been a long time out in India; and from the nature of his intercourse with all varieties of natives, he has had opportunities of judging of them more accurately than many others can have done, for he did not come out young, and he had been well educated at home, belonging to a family of respectability. He tells me he is often amused with the unfortunate impression made upon new arrivals by the result of their first slight and very limited observations. They are apt to

compare all they see with all that they remember; to mistake their own habits for customs necessary to all; to regard a long-cherished notion as an established truth—a law of nature! They make no allowance for the manners of other races, for the difference of climate, constitution, character, usage. He assures me that the people of this country are as happy as—happier than—the bulk of mankind; and that the reason why many of us doubt this, is because we, with our previous experience and turn of mind, could not make ourselves happy with the same very simple means. It was a gentle reproof for my frequent exclamations of pity for naked people fed on pulse, housed in matting, and lying on the ground. On the same principle I might weep that I was not born a princess! He showed me that the poor Hindoo, little as I think of him, is good-humoured, satisfied, content with his own ways, wishing for nothing beyond what he can possess, nor at present capable of enjoying any higher pleasures. And 'contentment being great riches,' what more can we wish for him, and why waste compassion where it is not wanted?

This philosophical conversation was disturbed by the entrance of a box-wahler with the most tempting Dacca muslins, on the display of which the gentlemen one and all fled to the billiard-table.

*10th.*—I am not sorry, after all, to find myself once more in my beautiful apartment at Chowringhee, even though the quiet life we led at that cool and pleasant bungalow was so much more to my taste than the company doings of this gay house. I was latterly seeing nothing of my husband, for he has really plenty of business. Another barrister has been laid up, and has left all his work to Arthur; and as every one tells me that he is sure now to succeed, we are going to prepare in earnest for our lengthened sojourn here, and we are actually arranging our establishment! We want to get a house in the town, in an airy situation, small, yet large enough to contain the law chambers; so that there being no carriage necessary for the transport of the gentleman, one pair of horses may do for both him and the lady, and we can either ride them or drive them as we like. We are no expense to my brother-in-law here beyond what we two consume in the eating way at his always abundant table, because all our servants are, like his, on board wages, as are all servants here: they all attend on their own masters, relieving the host and his household of every trouble; and if we were not here, some one else would be. That is indeed one reason why we wish to go, for we take up the spare apartment. Besides, we ought to have our own house, in which, as befits a man of business, we mean to live more quietly than we can manage to do here. We talked this all over at the Hive, and settled it, and announced it, and mean to act upon it at the proper time, having only yielded so far to Cary as to promise not to be too easily satisfied with a new lodging. I found a pair of very handsome Cashmere shawls waiting for me here from one of Arthur's successful clients; and a turquoise ring, a charm, I understand, from another. No one has again offered money. It is a system this I cannot like; but being the custom, and these presents not so very costly, I submit. I shall turn one of the shawls into furniture, this being also allowable.

Driving through the park yesterday at Barrackpore, when quitting it, I thought it all looked fresher than ever. The variety of the trees gives such a pretty effect to the scenery, the peopled and the dark richness of its massive foliage forming so good a background to the airy tamarind, with its light and tender leaf and its flexible branches: then there were clumps of curious bamboo, almost the usefulest of all most bountiful nature's productions to an Indian, combining the strength of a post with the lightness of a tube, and capable, while growing, of being bent or led into any



shape required for after purposes. There is a hedge of bamboo between the park and the road: it makes the best of all fences, growing quite thick at bottom, and carrying up an equal and very impervious barrier for thirty or forty feet as the eye measures. The stems grow quite like our copewood, a great many from one shoot; and when cut over, they quickly spring again. On the eastern side of India they attain a much larger size than they do here. They are the same species as the cane, but more like a reed, such as one might expect to find in Brobdingnag; in fact this tree is classed with the grasses. The stems are hollow, except at the joints, above which they are constantly cut nearer or farther up the tube, at a proper distance, for different-sized cups or vessels. Houses, carts, utensils, fences, almost everything, is made of this invaluable reed. A plank or other bit of manufactured wood is scarcely ever seen in a native house, except in such as imitate the Europeans. The leaf is long and spiral, growing so luxuriantly, as quite to conceal the formality of the stems, so that when these are allowed to grow up together, the clump has a graceful shape, spreading out at the top like an arbour. The peupal, at a distance, somewhat resembles the Scotch elm, with the peculiarity I mentioned regarding the trunk—that it looks as if made up of several stems stuck together, of course affording no timber. The tamarind is most like our ash, but much more beautiful. There are one or two banyan-trees in the park by way of specimens, but they are young, and comparatively small; the effect of the shoots descending, with the long fibres attached, which are to take root, and to send up each a new tree, is very curious: they hang all round the parent from every branch like so many pendants. There are also in the park some fine trees of the cedar tribe in appearance, one or two of which show to much advantage in a group of more spreading kinds. Lord Wellesley seems studiously to have avoided planting all such trees as we suppose indigenous to the soil—the palm, the date, the cocoa-nut, the plantain, the mango—which was surely a mistake, as they are some of them beautiful, and all effective when well arranged.

There are a great many varieties of pretty flowering shrubs in the pleasure-grounds near the house, which the rains have brought out into great beauty; and there is a well-laid-out flower garden; but the flowers, to my mind, do not equal the flowering-shrubs. The pomegranate and the oleander always struck me as the brightest among a bright show. The zoological rarities were few, and made but a poor appearance; so I have no tender recollection of any of these living wonders, saving my one friend among them, the portly elephant, whom we so frequently met in the retired lanes bringing home upon his huge back the load of branches for his supper, piled high behind the little *mohaut*, always perched upon his neck.

12th.—Besides the vivid green, so ornamental to the once bare landscape, we owe to the rainy clouds a deep and varied sky, especially about sunset, such as we never saw during the clear hot weather, unless latterly just before a storm. The river now fills its banks, and makes quite a noble figure; and we still enjoy the luxury of sitting all day with open windows, though here at Chowringhee we lose what much enlivened the view from Tittyghur—the traffic on the Hoogly. Ever since the rains began, never less than from thirty to forty boats were in sight from the Hive, mostly sweeping down to Calcutta with the produce of the up-country. Some of these were very small and picturesque, others clumsy enough; scarcely any of them had decent sails, though all pretended to something of the kind. They are rowed by a greater number of men than one would suppose to be necessary, who do not sit like our boatmen—square to their oars—but incline their bodies inwards, and so lose half the power of their stroke—making up by numbers for want of skill, or perhaps

strength. Yet I have seen a heavily-laden boat dragged along by men—towed by them, walking at a good steady pace, without apparent difficulty; the stream, however, was in their favour. In speculating on the extent of this river-traffic, we must recollect that in India there is no land-carriage, except that upon a man's head or a bullock's back: there are no roads admitting of any other. Fancy what railways would do here; the change they would make—the wonders they would work; the ease with which they could be formed where labour is so cheap, and a dead level extends on all sides for hundreds of miles!

13th.—It is decidedly less airy here than it was in the country, but a great deal more airy in this Chowringhee road than it is in Middleton Row, just behind us, where I had to go to pick up a friend this morning, with whom I was to drive to see the launch of a new steamer. We proceeded first to the court-house, to secure Arthur as our attendant, and then we went on to the docks at Garden Reach. A shed had been erected close to the stern of the launch, which we found crowded with people, among whom our Parsee friends were conspicuous. They had, I fancy, something to do with the new vessel—part owners perhaps—at any rate they were in some authority: they came over to us, and conducted us close up to the fine boat, whose hull only had been visible from our first position. At a distance, the vessel looked very gay—we had been admiring her all the way we came—dressed up with flags; her decks crowded with people. The Parsees placed us very well, for the burra bibi, who was to perform the ceremony of the christening, passed close to us, supported on one side by a member of council, and on the other by the native owner, holding in her hands a smartly-decorated bottle of claret, attached by a long string to the launch. The workmen immediately began to cut away the blocks, and in a few moments off sprung the vessel, carrying the bottle with her, which swung against her side as she darted forward, and broke; while a sound, meant to inform us of her name, seemed to issue from the moving lips of the great lady, but was lost in the shouts of the multitude. There is always something exciting in seeing so many people collected together, all intent on one object of interest; but this particular crowd made the more impression upon me, as it was the first deserving of the name I had seen composed of these dark-coloured individuals in all their varieties of costume, and many of them so near to me, that their countenances and their actions were plainly observable. I thought them very still; their voices feeble, compared with the hurra that would have rent the air on a similar occasion in our own country. The only hearty cheer given came from the few Europeans present, and the loudest proceeded from some English sailors belonging to merchantmen in the harbour.

16th.—Arthur has bought a pair of Arab ponies and a little phaeton; a dead bargain, he thinks—cheaper than usual, I believe, for horses are dear here: £100 the current price for a good riding-horse—£150 not uncommon. These are less costly than the little equipage we first fell in love with, and not exactly so handsome, but quite good enough to satisfy me. A family going to the Cape were glad to dispose of all their chattels without delay; and as I really believe we shall not keep our health either unless we ride, in a country where, for so great a part of the year, we find it impossible to walk, we consider this purchase a necessary part of the stock in trade, like the writing-table, clerk, pens, &c. We rode accordingly last night between two heavy showers, watching our time so well, that we did not catch a drop from either.

18th.—I have just had a visit from my little friend Selena, looking so happy, that I think she must, by some contrivance or other, have heard of the young cavalry officer. I don't believe she has forgotten him, though she is very impenetrable on the subject. We

tried her one day at the Hive, quite unintentionally of course. Something was said about a Miss Bayley's marriage. She had displeased her friends by confessing an attachment to a young military man, when they had disposed of her in their own minds to a middle-aged civilian. Nobody could understand her folly. Girls, it seems, don't come out to India to please themselves as to the future companions of their lives, but to assist their families by making such alliances as will benefit a whole sisterhood, the fortunate husband of the docile bride being expected to contribute the funds requisite for the next importation. It sometimes happened in the good old times that he has had to repay to the lady's relations the cost of his own bargain, but this fashion has passed away since rupees have been less plenty among the Company's servants. Poor Miss Bayley is, it seems, the advanced-guard of a considerable connection, sent for by an uncle to aid in the promotion of her train, and despatched by her mother with injunctions to sacrifice every feeling for the one object in view. And she has done so. She is a pretty lively girl, showily, but not well educated; and they exposed her fresh from school to the weariness of a five-months' voyage, under the care of some lady of whom she knew little, and where was a handsome man, her first admirer.

23d.—Some great man dead! the minute-guns are firing—have been firing for half an hour. We were all in much anxiety, fearing that a friend was gone, till word was brought that the mournful event had occurred in another presidency. This was a relief to us, but there would be the grief somewhere, and the sound was saddening. We hear the guns from the Fort very plainly when the air is very still, or when the wind sets this way, or when there is a hush among the busy crowd upon the Moydaun. The evening gun quite startled me lately one very quiet night; and I recollect a lady saying it half killed her with terror one day she was dining with the commandant: it appeared to bellow forth at her elbow.

25th.—We were much alarmed to-day by Caroline fainting twice. We sent at once for the doctor, who seemed to think she had only been over-doing herself a little with all these parties during the rains—seldom a healthy season. He has kept her on her sofa, leaving her some simple prescriptions; and as one can't trust these servants, I sat up with her for fear of any relapse; but she got to sleep early, and she has slept on, and it is now past midnight.

26th.—I could not sleep, for I had gone back in thought to childish days before Cary had seen Edward, when she acted as my governess and my nurse, sitting up with me, don't you remember, in some infantine illness, and so faithfully watching my slow recovery? I went out into the veranda, to walk up and down there a while, throwing a shawl over me, and putting the lamp into a shaded corner. It was very lovely this eastern scene: the clear sky, the stars so brilliant, the moon so full, the white, flat-roofed houses all peopled by gazers like myself, the white pillars of the verandas and the projecting porches shrouded in their screens of luxuriant shrubbery—all calm, and still, and peaceful, but not quiet, for the natives love these clear, cool nights, and the servants were awake, talking gently, and moving silently; and the measured tread of the chokedars, or night-guard, alone sounded above the murmur of the stillness. There are no public watchmen; people are therefore obliged to hire their own guards, as it would be unsafe to leave the premises unprotected.

30th.—Desired ayah, just in so many words, to send my carriage (how grand we have become!), at such an hour, to the court-house for her master. I heard her deliver the message to the jemadar, who was of course on the landing, in at least double the number of words received from me. He went to find the sirdar, to whom

he preached quite a sermon on this short text; and the sirdar decidedly made a lecture and a-half out of it for the coachman. The time occupied among them would have sufficed for the drive. In general, in this house we employ no medium of communication when we have an order to give; but, contrary to all Indian rule, send at once for the actual servant wanted, and tell him shortly what he is to do, otherwise a friend of yours and mine might 'lose a thrifle of timper,' as a merry Irish acquaintance, the tenor of our celebrated and rather delayed concert, would say. How true it is that these little household troubles fret us more than real disasters! It has sometimes been a difficulty to me to avoid anger for what anger would not cure—the indolence and the indifference of the servants. It is very nearly impossible to keep them in order. Their total want of pride in the appearance of the various articles of furniture they have charge of, and the damp of the climate, making rather an extra degree of care necessary, combine to render the task of supervising their occupations a very serious annoyance. Cary, who is active, fond of managing her family, and no great lover of quiet pursuits, has, I believe, pleasure in visiting every hole and corner every day within and without, including the stable department. What indolent I can make of these idle people I really fear to think of!

#### THINGS TALKED OF IN LONDON.

December 1850.

We are not all gone demented, though you may find it hard to believe the fact: there are some among us willing to hear, see, and say nothing, and work on hopefully. Our chemical philosophers, working in their laboratories, find the laws of affinities still pursuing their natural course; geologists have met with nothing especially marvellous to disturb their theories of upheaval and subsidence; and the astronomer-royal has not yet been frightened out of his propriety by the appearance of any flatulent planet, comet, or nebula, in the field of his telescope. The world still circles where it did.

Among a multiplicity of matters pressing for notice, I am a little puzzled where to begin: perhaps Faraday's discourse delivered before the Royal Society as their Bakerian lecture may be taken as a worthy subject to lead off with—it would not be easy to select one more interesting. You are of course aware that this distinguished philosopher has been for several years pursuing his researches into the magnetic condition of bodies, during which he discovered the prime fact of the existence of a class of diamagnetics as well as magnetics; that is to say, certain substances which are repelled by the poles of a magnet, as well as those which are attracted. He now finds that the constituents of our atmosphere come also within these series: oxygen is attracted, while nitrogen is repelled. The first experiments were performed with bubbles blown in soap-suds, and afterwards bubbles of glass were used, which admit of being charged readily with any sort of gas, and so made available for experiment and inquiry. The result shows that oxygen stands in the same magnetic relation to gaseous bodies generally as iron to the other metals. Well, with these facts as a groundwork, Mr Faraday builds up a most ingenious theory in explanation of the magnetic phenomena daily observed in many different parts of the globe. These consist, as I have more than once explained in your Journal in articles on 'Terrestrial Magnetism,' in certain movements of the magnetic needles, or rather bars, suspended in the observatories at certain hours of the day. At about nine o'clock in the morning they begin a westerly movement, which reaches its maximum at some time in the afternoon, when the bar gradually resumes its former position. These movements, known as the diurnal variations, are greatest in high north or south latitudes, and least in

the tropical and equatorial regions. The cause of them has long been a paramount object of speculation among magneticians; and now, according to Mr Faraday, this cause is discovered.

To understand this, we must remember, that in proportion as iron is heated, so does its magnetism diminish: it is just the same with oxygen—increased temperature, decreased magnetism. Then also we are not to forget that the earth is a great magnet, with lines of magnetic force, as Faraday calls them, though other philosophers say they are only lines of direction issuing from one of its poles, and bestriding the temperate and equatorial zones as so many mighty rainbows, until they re-enter at the other pole. At the two extremities they are compressed somewhat closely together, but become more open as they rise high into space. These particulars being understood, we shall have but little difficulty in comprehending how that, when the sun rises, and warms the atmosphere, it immediately causes a change in the magnetic condition of the oxygen, and in the direction of the lines of force. Hence the tension by which the magnet is held in its normal position being weakened, it is left free to swing round towards the west, which is seen to be the case as the sun approaches the meridian. Besides this, which may be taken as the general effect, there are certain phenomena of disturbance occurring at irregular periods, and anomalies of movement dependent on position and climate, all of which are explicable by the theory. Mr Faraday was enabled to show from diagrams of the daily movements of the magnets at Hobart-Town, Toronto, St Helena, and the Cape of Good Hope, that the differences were apparent only, that each and all were under the same law; and in this way he solves another of nature's mysteries, one intimately connected with some of her grandest phenomena and most far-reaching operations.

The process is very simple, and yet how beautifully does it answer all the requirements of the hypothesis! and we may content ourselves by making use of it, as scientific inquirers agree to accept of the undulatory theory of light, until a better shall be discovered. It has been shown that a column of the atmosphere a foot square is equal to 8000 lbs. weight of proto-sulphate of iron; hence the fact of the magnetic condition of oxygen, and its modification under heat, becomes less extraordinary than might on a first view be considered possible.

In the course of his lecture, Mr Faraday mentioned a fact which deserves more than a passing notice. Oxygen, as he says, whenever it is brought into combination with carbonic acid, phosphorus, and other gases, immediately loses its magnetic property. Have we not here a key to the cause of epidemics? Admit that oxygen possesses a protective quality in virtue of its magnetism, and that it loses this when interfused with miasmatic exhalations from towns or waste lands, would not the supposition assist in accounting for the diseases said to be propagated by atmospheric influence?

The question or fact of the earth's magnetism, as you will have seen, remains unaffected by Mr Faraday's elucidations. He claims only to have explained the cause of the diurnal magnetic phenomena which have been so assiduously observed for some years past. But to have gained an insight into one of nature's workings, is to have seized the clue to many; and, as there is reason to believe, the able philosopher whose lecture I have here sketched is already on the scent of the cause of gravity. May he be spared to realise his expectations! On quitting this part of the subject, it is but fair to mention that Becquerel, well known as a careful experimentalist, had arrived at some results respecting the magnetism of oxygen, which were published a few months ago in the *Comptes Rendus* of the *Académie des Sciences*. He, however, stopped short of Faraday's application of the fact.

On St Andrew's Day last the Royal Society held their one hundred and eighty-seventh anniversary—to elect a new council and officers for the ensuing year; to hear the Earl of Rosse, their president, deliver an address; to see him give a gold medal to Mr Brodie, son of the famous surgical baronet, and to Professor Graham, for their chemical researches, and the Rumford Medal to M. Arago, for his highly-valuable discoveries and treatises on physical optics, and the Copley Medal to P. A. Hansen of Seeberg, near Gotha, for his astronomical labours; and then—they adjourned to dinner. Philosophers must eat as well as ordinary mortals.

The Exhibition is of course a prominent subject of talk; indeed, were it desirable, I could fill three or four columns once a month with the gossip thereupon. The worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, desirous of showing what English modellers and chasers can do, have advertised their intention of giving away L.1000 in a score of prizes for the best specimens of their craft in the precious metals. Chances here for somebody! The artificial flower-makers too, mean to show us a touch of their skill: they are preparing a wreath, which is to be stretched the whole length of the building, with garlanded pendentives, arranged so as to present a brilliant *coup-d'œil*. Then an enterprising map-publisher promises us a globe fifty feet in diameter, with all the continents and islands in high relief, and with galleries so disposed, as to enable visitors to view all the four quarters of the world, and the north and south poles to boot. It will be geography-made-easy on a large scale. And from some stony neighbourhood we are to have a huge monolith, to weigh at least twenty tons. Is this to be a *pièce de résistance*? What a pity that we can't have Ben Nevis at once, and cage the old giant over! Besides these curiosities, there will be a host of new inventions and mechanical wonders, such as will astonish unimaginative people. You may judge of anticipated 'remuneration,' to use a word from the puffer's category, from its being said of one of our city confectioners that he offered to purchase the privilege of supplying the refreshments within the transparent edifice for L.3000: his offer was not accepted. As the roofing-in goes on, and the time of completion approaches, so does the popular curiosity increase; and the number of gazers in the park and around the building on a Sunday would suffice to people some half-dozen provincial towns. On other days, too, there is no lack of onlookers, including several hundreds of labourers, loitering round the gate in hope of being hired. Some of these poor fellows have walked up to town from great distances in the country, fancying that work and wages were to be had for the asking. It would amuse you to stand near while the dinner-bell rings, and see the army of workmen file out from the interior. If the weather be at all favourable, they bivouac in groups under the trees, or in nooks and corners, and so dine in public—the neighbourhood being as yet deficient in eating-houses. Thus, as you perceive, the building has already a history, which, interesting in the present, will become still more so in future. The Society of Arts are to hold one of their ordinary meetings in it at the end of this month.

Some of our artists and students in aesthetics are desirous that the Exhibition should be made the means of creating and diffusing correct ideas and principles on matters of taste wherein we prosy islanders are said to be singularly barren. Our costume, they say, admits of being greatly improved in style and material, and made more picturesque and varied without any sacrifice of comfort or convenience. They will find many ready to co-operate with them in a reform of raiment; and if they can only succeed in devising a graceful and easy substitute for our present ugly and oppressive hat, what a relief will they not afford to the masculine heads of all civilised communities! *Nil desperandum!*



Cheap gas and good water 'still continue' to be talked about. We have realised the one, and are in a fair way to obtain the other. The project of supplying the metropolis from the rain-fall on an extensive catching-ground is not yet abandoned. A recent exploration of the district which comprises several of 'Surrey's pleasant hills' has made us acquainted with an additional and inexhaustible source of the pure element in a number of perennial springs of remarkably soft and limpid water. Thus the objection that rain would be too uncertain a supply is got rid of. It would be a grand benefit could the new service be made available before May next, as one of the stipulations on the part of the Exhibition Commissioners is, that the providers of refreshments shall furnish filtered water free of cost to all who may require it within the building. Under the circumstances, we must hope that our present companies will lay on unstinted streams.

You will be pleased to hear that there is a prospect of the new park at Battersea becoming ere long a thing of form and proportions. The celebrated Red House, so dear to Cockney pigeon-shooters, has been purchased by government, together with such portions of territory as to them seemed meet, from which a suspension-bridge is to be stretched across to the Chelsea shore, so as to afford ready means of access to what will doubtless become a popular recreation-ground. Such an overgrown capital as ours is cannot well have too many breathing spaces. Besides the Battersea project, there is talk of a new entrance to St James's Park; of ventilating the law courts at Westminster by means of a jet of steam; of the educational institutes rising up in various parts of the land. Free libraries and museums at Manchester, Liverpool, and Kidderminster; an atheneum at Bury; and schools in benighted districts. The rector of St James's has established a lending library for the use of his poorer parishioners. It is open one evening in the week for the issue and reception of books; the charge for reading is a half-penny per volume, and already such results have been manifested as show that this additional attempt to diffuse enlightenment is worthily appreciated. The Industrial School too, lately erected near Anerly, on the Croydon Railway, is regarded as a hopeful means of improvement. As it is the combined work of some five or six poor-law unions, we shall now have an opportunity of seeing whether any permanently-practical endeavour can be made for the effectual reclamation and humanising of pauper children. The establishment affords accommodation for six hundred boys, in apartments well warmed and ventilated, and provided with the essentials of in-door and out-door instruction. There is a covered play-ground, a farm-yard, and seven acres of land laid out as garden-ground, whereby such occupation will be furnished to the lads as will make them more useful in the world than slavish bands of oakum-pickers can ever hope to be.

A few items more, selected from a hundred. One of our electricians promises to exhibit by and by a model of a globe, made to rotate by currents of electricity circulating round it; some pianoforte makers are fitting coloured glass keys to their instruments, instead of the black and white bone which have so long been in use; reclamation of land is going on in the west as well as in the east—250 acres have just been conquered from the sea at Youghall; the railway returns throughout the kingdom, from January to September of the present year, amounted to L.9,525,707, being one and a-quarter millions more than in the same period of 1849: and it is said that the number of passengers conveyed during the past year was more than double of the whole population, Ireland excepted. What will it be next year? There is comfort for timid sailors in the recent invention, by Mr Cunningham of the Royal Navy, of a means of reefing topsails from the deck. According to the

descriptions, 'the sail reefs itself, and from the time the yard is lowered, it is close-reefed in two seconds. The reefs may be again shaken out, and the topsail at the masthead in twenty seconds. It is well known to officers that many a reef is kept in during the night, and, in consequence, the vessel's progress is retarded, on account of a disinclination to send men aloft, more particularly if the weather be wet. But with this admirable contrivance sail can be taken in, and again made, in a short space of time, without sending a man aloft. It must manifestly save much anxiety, and do away with the risk of losing men off the yards when reefing in bad weather, more particularly in cold latitudes, off Cape Horn, &c.' The colonising expedition, which I told you some time ago had sailed for the Auckland Islands to establish a southern whale-fishery, has arrived safely, and taken possession. Seventy New Zealanders, already located there, have been indemnified for their cattle and clearings, and the two chiefs sworn in as constables. A bed of cockles, seven acres in extent, and as good as oysters, has been discovered, as well as timber-trees fit for building purposes, pigs and wildfowl, plenty of cabbages, and grass all the year round. Here are elements of prosperity, if wisely taken advantage of. M. Ferdinand Lemaitre, a Frenchman, has submitted to the Académie a project for an 'aërostatic bridge' from Dover to Calais; another proposes the formation of 'a universal sanitary congress, to arrest and destroy the cause of cholera;' and others have come forward with a scheme to establish 150 telegraph offices throughout Paris and the suburbs, for the transmission of messages to all quarters—the communications to be kept up by connecting the various stations with one central office, where clerks would be in attendance to put the signalling parties into rapport.

#### KING OF STORKS.

There has been shot near Bedford, in the neighbourhood of Hawnes, that rare and valuable bird the *laner faico lanarius*, the king of storks. It weighs two pounds and a quarter, near four feet in the stretch of its wings, and twenty inches length of body. This highly-prized and valuable bird is said by Montayne to fly at the rate of one hundred and fifty miles an hour. Colonel Thornton, an expert falconer, estimates the flight of this bird in pursuit of a snipe to have been nine miles in eleven minutes, without including the frequent turnings. Audubon, in his 'Birds of America,' states that he has seen the falcon come at the report of a gun, and carry off teal, not thirty steps distant from the sportsman who killed it, with a daring assurance as surprising as unexpected. It has been presented to, and is now in, the collection of Mr Mantel of Bedford.—*Zoologist.*

#### DECLINE OF THE STAGE.

Managers at all times have had recourse to strange, out-of-the-way expedients to excite the flagging zeal of the public, and draw the million to the theatre. Hence the introduction of horses, elephants, lions, dogs, and even monkeys. But it is not fair to lay the whole blame of this on the ill-starred speculator, who must pay his salaries on Saturday, and whose natural good taste often revolts against the course necessity compels him to adopt. If legitimate talent ceases to attract, it is something to find even a Belgian giant, or a General Tom Thumb, to retreat on and supply the deficiency. Who in his senses would lay out a large sum on a rapid spectacle, if the sterling ore of Shakspeare or Sheridan maintained its current value? Many able writers and ardent lovers of the stage have thought differently, and have penned eloquent essays to show that the managers depreciate the national taste, that the decline of the stage is entirely owing to their obtuseness, that they pander to a depraved appetite, and that the public never fail to crowd the theatre when truth, passion, and nature are placed

before them. Alas! all this sounds well in theory, but reduce it to practice, and the sandy basis of the opinion soon shows itself. For a time, indeed, the premises may be borne out by the conclusion, but the insatiate thirst after variety wearies even of perfection itself. The manager who tries to lead or reform the public will gain the honours of martyrdom long before he accomplishes his object.—*Dublin University Magazine*.

#### ENGRAVING ON TILES.

Ezekiel mentions that he was commanded by the Spirit to take a tile, and engrave on it a representation of the city of Jerusalem besieged by her enemies, and invested on every side (chap. iv. 1—3). 'We may observe,' says an able commentator on this text, 'that God often suits prophetic types and figures to the genius and education of the prophets themselves. So the figures which Amos makes use of are generally taken from such observations as are proper to the employment of a shepherd or a husbandman. Ezekiel had a peculiar talent for architecture, so several representations are suitable to that profession. And they that suppose the emblems here made use of to be below the dignity of the prophetic office, may as well accuse Archimedes of folly for making lines in the dust.' Nor did our own incomparable Matthew Henry understand the allusion better than those objectors. He observes, 'It was Jerusalem's honour, that while she kept her integrity, God had engraven her upon the palm of his hands; but now the faithful city had fallen aside, a worthless, brittle tile or brick is thought good enough to portray it on.' Ingenious and beautiful as this antithesis unquestionably is, yet it is not true, for the prophet employed the material then commonly in use for public records. Had that unostentatiously-learned and most able commentator possessed the advantages which modern expositors enjoy, resulting from the extensive researches of travellers in Assyria, he would have known that the Assyrians engraved inscriptions and devices upon tiles, bricks, and cylinders of clay, while yet in a plastic state, and which, afterwards being baked in a furnace, faithfully retained the impression, without the loss of a single character, for centuries. Undesigned coincidences like this must assure us that this book of prophecy is both genuine and authentic.—*Blackburn's Nerech*.

#### AGE OF ANIMALS.

A bear rarely exceeds twenty years; a dog lives twenty years; a wolf, twenty; a fox, fourteen or sixteen. The average age of cats is fifteen years; of a squirrel or hare, seven or eight years; and a rabbit seven years. Elephants have been known to have lived to the great age of 400 years. When Alexander had conquered Porus, king of India, he took a great elephant, which had fought valiantly for the king, and named him Ajax, dedicated him to the sun, and let him go with this inscription—'Alexander, the son of Jupiter, hath dedicated Ajax to the sun.' This elephant was found with this inscription 350 years after. Pigs have been known to live to the age of thirty years; the rhinoceros to fifty. A horse has been known to live to the age of seventy-two, but averages twenty-five to thirty. Camels sometimes live to the age of 100. Stags are long-lived. Sheep seldom exceed the age of ten. Cows live about fifteen years. An eagle died at Vienna of the age of 104 years; ravens frequently reach the age of 100. Swans have been known to live 300 years; pelicans are long-lived. A tortoise has been known to live much above 190 years.—*Zoologist*.

#### GROG-SHOPS FOR WOMEN.

A respectable New York paper asserts that there are certain secret places in this city furnished in the most gorgeous style, and patronised almost exclusively by women of wealth and fashion, who go there first for ice-creams, &c. then for claret, champagne, brandy, mint juleps, sherry coblers, and brandy slings. 'This is no fancy sketch; there are at this moment scores of women of the first rank in society who have become inveterate tipplers at these places.'—*Bristol Temperance Herald*.

#### THE TWIN BROTHERS.

BORN suckled on one mother's breast,  
Both nursed upon one mother's knee,  
Both by one father fondly pressed,  
Who, proud to see his fruitful tree  
Bearing twin blossoms passing fair,  
Felt himself rich beyond compare.

And rosy cheek was pressed to cheek,  
And chubby arm lay locked in arm,  
When, 'neath their mother's eye so meek,  
They lay in love's embraces warm;  
And none except that watchful mother  
Could tell the one child from the other.

Time passed—one was a witting boy  
Robust of health, of stature tall;  
The other wore a forehead high,  
Of weakly frame, of stature small;  
Their parents felt the double wo,  
But bent with patience to the blow.

One was a dwarf, and one a fool:  
How powerless each without his brother!  
Yet when they plodding went to school,  
How well the one could aid the other!  
The dwarf was dux, the o'ergrown boy  
Was king of every game and play.

Throughout the opening scenes of youth  
They passed by all, admired and loved;  
By mutual love and mutual truth  
The strength of twain bond was proved;  
Mighty, invincible, combined,  
Who shall divide whom God hath joined!

The high-browed youth toiled day and night,  
The book to him a glorious sun,  
Dispelling by its genial light  
All doubtings vague, all shadows dun;  
And in that furnace fire was wrought  
One ingot pure of freeborn thought.

And when good heads were wanted, and  
When mighty hearts were throbbing wild,  
What spirit held supreme command  
But his, that high-browed sickly child!  
Who'd vowed to set his country free—  
Who led her on to victory!

That strong-thewed brother, where is he?—  
On in the van amid the brave;  
A freeman 'mong the dauntless free,  
He found a hero's glorious grave;  
And by his patriot brother's side  
The hero fought, the hero died.

The combat o'er, the battle won,  
All about their mighty leader's praise;  
The loving twin, the duteous son,  
The soul which lit the patriot blaze;  
Alas! his heart's best blood is shed—  
He shares his brother's gory bed!

Their birth was one, their death was one;  
Clasped in each other's arms they lay;  
Their love was proved, their work was done,  
They passed from life and time away;  
And from their daisied graves there grew  
A stately pine and weeping yew.

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JAMES BALLANTINE.

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